

Message Text

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ORIGIN HEW-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OES-07 MED-02 CIAE-00 INR-07
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P 232237Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, OSCI, TBIO, UR, HK

SUBJECT: CDC BRIEFING ON SOVIET INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC

REF: LENINGRAD 01727

1. CDC STAFF HELD WIDELY PUBLICIZED BRIEFING IN ATLANTA (12/22AM) FOR ABOUT 75 PERSONS TO DISCUSS TECHNICAL ASPECTS ONLY OF CURRENT INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC IN USSR AND CHARACTERISTICS OF VIRUS INVOLVED. REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDED FROM NEWS SERVICES, SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS, EPIDEMIOLOGISTS, VACCINE MANUFACTURERS, WHO, LOCAL AND STATE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER USGA'S.

2. BASIC INTENT OF BRIEFING WAS TO REVIEW ALL KNOWN TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE CURRENT EPIDEMIC AND VIRUS INVOLVED. SOME PROJECTIONS ON SIGNIFICANCE FOR USA WERE
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MADE. NO POLICY MATTERS WERE DISCUSSED.

3. CDC STAFF REVIEWED SOVIET EPIDEMIOLOGIC DATA PROVIDED DIRECTLY BY SOVIETS AND THROUGH WHO CONCLUDING THAT IT WAS SPREAD ENTIRELY ACROSS USSR WITH OVER 60-70 CITIES AFFECTED. THIS FACT WAS USED TO POINT OUT INFECTIOUS NATURE OF VIRUS AND ABILITY TO SPREAD RAPIDLY.

4. STAFF ALSO REVIEWED PREVIOUS PERIOD OF PREVALENCE OF VIRUS IN USA(1948-1950). MAIN POINT MADE HERE WAS THAT THE PATTERN OF OLD EPIDEMICS DOES NOT NECESSARILY PREDICT THE SPREAD OF NEW ONES.

5. ANTIGENIC NATURE OF VIRUS WAS DISCUSSED AND CDC INDICATED PERSONS BELOW 20-25 CARRIED NO ANTIBODIES FOR STRAIN. ABOVE 52 YEARS OLD POPULATIONS HAD REDUCED ANTIBODY LEVELS. THIS PATTERN IS SAME FOR USA AND USSR.

6. SOME DISCUSSION OF SURVEILLANCE NEEDS AND POSSIBLE PRODUCTION OF VACCINES WERE DISCUSSED BUT ALL OPTIONS WERE KEPT OPEN. NEWS SERVICES NOTED IN TODAY'S PRESS THAT CDC MAY START SURVEILLANCE OF AIR PASSENGERS FROM USSR AND HONG KONG BUT CDC SAYS THIS IS VERY LOW ON ITS PRIORITY OF POSSIBLE REPEAT POSSIBLE ACTIONS.

7. CDC MADE CLEAR DURING INITIAL PRESENTATION OF DATA AND LATER QUESTIONS THAT USSR SCIENTIST HAD SHARED INFORMATION THEY HAD IN TIMELY AND FORTHCOMING MANNER WITH CDC DIRECTLY AND THROUGH WHO. CDC NOTED TO DEPARTMENT ONLY NOT IN RECESSION THAT REPORTS FROM EMBASSY MOSCOW AND CONGEN LENINGRAD CONFIRMED ALL INFORMATION SOVIETS HAD PROVIDED THEM DIRECTLY BUT THEY WERE GRATIFIED BY CONCURRENCE OF INFORMATION AND INTEREST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF DEPARTMENT STAFF.

8. CDC DID NOT REPORT AT MEETING BUT TODAY HAS TAKEN URGENT ACTION OF REQUESTING BY HEW TELEX (NUMBER 701) AND COMMERCIAL CABLE DIRECTLY TO HAVE THREE SCIENTISTS VISIT USSR BEGINNING JANUARY 8 FOR TWO WEEKS UNDER 03.06 PROGRAM TO LEARN MORE OF SOVIET EXPERIENCE. VANCE

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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